

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 175864
ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 AGRE-00 AID-05 EB-08
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APPROVED BY NEA/PAB:PWLANDE
ASIA/BIS:JCOE (SUBSTANCE)
USDA/FAS:HNORTON (SUBSTANCE)
AID/FFP:AMERCKER (SUBSTANCE)
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P 271948Z JUL 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY DACCA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 175864

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: EAID, EAGR, BG

SUBJECT: BANGLADESH FOODGRAIN IMPORTS

REF: (A) DACCA 4073 (NOTAL); (B) DACCA 4139 (NOTAL)

1. REFTEL A WHICH REPORTS ON BDG COMMERCIAL PURCHASES OF AN ADDITIONAL 200,000 TONS OF WHEAT AND RICE IN AUSTRALIA, BURMA, THAILAND AND NEPAL HAS RAISED CONCERNS HERE. WE ARE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED AS IT MAY REPRESENT ONLY PART OF ANOTHER BDG SPASM OF FRANTIC PROCUREMENT ABROAD. RECEIPT OF REF(A) COINCIDED WITH CALL HERE BY BD EMBASSY MINISTER KABIR AND ECON OFF ISLAM ON LANDE AND ARCHARD OF NEA/PAB TO REQUEST AN ADDITIONAL 150,000 TONS OF FOODGRAIN UNDER TITLE I THIS YEAR. THE BANGLADESHIS SEEMED UNAWARE OF THE RECENT COMMERCIAL PURCHASES.

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2. LANDE MADE CLEAR OUR CONCERNS WITH PROBABLE EFFECTS WHICH HIGH IMPORT LEVELS COULD HAVE ON LOCAL PROCUREMENT, PORT CONGESTION, AND, POSSIBLY, SPOILAGE. THIS CONCERN WAS SUBSEQUENTLY REINFORCED BY RECEIPT OF REF B WHICH AUGURS PROBABLE SERIOUS PORT CONGESTION BEGINNING NEXT MONTH. HE NOTED OUR DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THE BDG DID NOT DISCUSS THE

PURCHASES WITH US IN ADVANCE, AS THIS DID NOT ACCORD WITH THE CONCEPT OF OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE BDG IN HELPING THEM

DEAL WITH THE FOODGRAIN SITUATION, A CONCEPT WHICH AMBASSADOR MASTERS HAS DISCUSSED WITH PRESIDENT ZIA AND WHICH WE UNDERSTOOD HAD ZIA'S IMPLICIT APPROVAL. FURTHER, LANDE NOTED THAT WE WISH TO KEEP EMBASSY DACCA AS THE FOCUS OF FOODGRAIN DISCUSSIONS AND PREFER THAT THE BDG FUNNEL REQUESTS FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE THROUGH THE EMBASSY.

3. ISLAM STATED THAT RECENT PURCHASES SHOULD NOT HAVE MUCH EFFECT ON LOCAL PROCUREMENT AS THIS WOULD BE LIMITED NEXT YEAR ANYWAY BECAUSE OF A PROJECTED DEFICIT IN THE COMING AMAN CROP. AS USUAL, DATA ON THE BD FOOD SITUATION WHICH ISLAM WAS USING WERE SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FROM OURS.

4. WHEN EMBASSY HAS HAD TIME TO ANALYZE EFFECTS OF THE CURRENT PURCHASES, WE WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING YOUR OPINION OF THE PROBABLE EFFECTS, ESPECIALLY AS CONCERNS LOCAL PROCUREMENT AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR A FY 78 TITLE I PROGRAM.

5. WHEN YOU MEET WITH FOOD MINISTRY OFFICIALS NEXT WEEK, WE SUGGEST THAT YOU STRONGLY EXPRESS THE CONCERN LISTED
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IN PARA 2.

6. FOR OTTAWA, CANBERRA: BANGLADESHI PLEAS FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE HERE ARE OFTEN PART OF A WIDER APPEAL TO MAJOR DONORS. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION WHICH YOU CAN DEVELOP ON FURTHER BDG REQUESTS TO YOUR HOST GOVERNMENTS.

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